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Assembly California Legislature



DIANE L. HARKEY
ASSEMBLYWOMAN, SEVENTY-THIRD DISTRICT

COMMITTEES
VICE CHAIR, HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
REVENUE AND TAXATION

October 16, 2009

Ms. Cathy Reheis-Boyd, Chairwoman
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force
c/o California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

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RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA

Dear Chair Reheis-Boyd:

As an Assemblymember representing a coastal district in Southern California, the implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) can have a significant impact on my constituents and the businesses within district, which rely heavily on abundant ocean resources for both consumptive and non-consumptive activities.

I strongly support Proposal 2 because of its strong protection of California's ocean resources while balancing adverse economic impacts for Orange County. In Orange County, proposal 2 shares coastal access points equally between those desiring to visit a marine reserve for viewing purposes, as well as those practicing sustainable fishing. It is also the only proposal that places a premium on capturing the entire spectrum of habitats and depth zones in the area, while allowing access to coastlines vital to the local marine economy. On the contrary, proposals 1 and 3 are inefficient – maximizing the closure of coastline and near-shore waters but capturing relatively little deeper water. If enacted, proposals 1 and 3 would devastate the marine economies in the area.

In addition, by placing 16% of southern California's ocean environment in protected areas, proposal 2 provides *significant* additional protections for California's currently healthy and sustainable ocean resources. It protects many of the most biologically productive, rich and diverse marine habitats in the state, including lush kelp forests, rugged reef systems, submarine canyons, inter-tidal coastal stretches, surf grass beds, pinniped rookeries, avian roosting sites, estuaries and tidal flats. It is an integrated proposal, maximizing conservation goals while at the same time minimizing impact on those who enjoy the sport of fishing, those who depend on fishing for their livelihood, and the economy of California.

While proposals 1 and 3 before the BRTF protect a larger percentage of the study area, it is at a substantial cost. Proposal 2 meets almost every size and spacing guideline in this unusual region dominated by sand bottom. While it is possible to improve on the proposal 2 scores from the Science Advisory Team, by a few percentage points, those

few incremental points will devastate the heritage of recreational fishermen and place many commercial fishermen on the brink of financial collapse – including those in Orange County. It would be ironic to over-regulate in this area, because the fisheries in Southern California are not characterized in such terms as “collapse” and “devastated” – indeed they have been recently cited as examples of well managed fisheries.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important issue to the environment and industry, as well as the people that are working to protect both for the long term.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Diane L. Harkey". The signature is stylized with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Diane L. Harkey
Assemblywoman, 73rd District